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Decorations

READERS will hardly fail to notice that the cover of this month's JOURNAL has undergone a temporary transformation, and that the inside pages also contain some unusual features. In places a splash of colour has been added: not as much as we should like, but enough for a seasonable gesture.

Around the third week of this month many of us will find ourselves committed to the pleasant task of transforming our living rooms. Some will certainly be mounting uncertain and rickety steps, chasing elusive drawing-pins and, at times smiting with ill-directed blows their own unoffending thumbs, as the business of 'doing the decorations' takes shape.

To many town-dwellers, intent on following a custom older than Christendom, the problem of securing a sufficient supply of greenery is a real one. For while the fir, the holly and the mistletoe, continue still to flourish, purse depth may limit quantity to a token purchase—sufficient to deck the mantel-piece, a sprig of holly for the pudding and (we hope) a bunch of mistletoe to hang at the door.

In such case it is likely that the natural foliage will find itself reinforced by man-made materials, either the shop variety of paper 'chains' already strung for hanging or better still by home-made ones. Making up the latter is bound to evoke happy memories of other days when a penny wad of paper strips and a jar of flour paste kept us stickily employed for hours and hours, and gave in return a glorious pre-taste of Christmas joys to come.

Yes, 'doing the decorations' is a decidedly childish affair, which is just as it should be if we have a mind to celebrate this Christmas, not as "immortalised" by Charles Dickens nor yet as 'commercialised' by Gordon Selfridge, but in welcoming to our homes the Christ-child, Himself.

Recruiting for Service

ONE THING always happened in the first Talbot House in Poperinghe. Men who came out of the line on one day would be eager to serve the men who came out of the line the following day. It was taken for granted that men were ready to take any opportunity of serving the needs of others. This is one of the traditions that have tended to weaken as Tœ H has developed. We have continued to expect members to serve their fellows but we have not been as efficient in spreading the idea of service to other members of the community. Years ago I was amused at the imaginative enterprise shown by a Boy Scout. He took very seriously the responsibility that was laid upon him to do a good turn to someone every day. As one day drew to a close he had not found any opportunity. Since he was unable to be of service he thought with sympathy of others in a similar situation and solemnly placed orange peel on the pathway so that other scouts might have the opportunity of removing it. This, in its results, may have been somewhat dangerous, but the idea was not at all bad.

Untapped man-power

It might reasonably be expected that in coming days much Tœ H activity will be directed towards two classes of the community: young people and those who are vaguely called 'old' people. I want to suggest that we need to think of both these classes in the light of the traditions that were first established in the Old House. A great deal is being done for youth in these new days. It is good that they should have placed within their reach opportunities for making a good use of their leisure time. It is perhaps good that their clubs should be serviced and equipped in a way that was very uncommon in past generations. I am quite sure, however, that we need to keep always in mind the possibility that we may be pauperising youth by our method of constantly providing things for them, unless at the same time we make great demands from them. Only if they recognise that a healthy life includes the obliga-

tion to give, even more than the right to receive, can we hope to build a healthy society. Because of this, Toc 'H ought always to think of the untapped manpower for service that can be found in the membership of youth clubs. They ought to take for granted that, if the opportunity is given to them, young folk will very gladly place their skills at the service of people who are in need.

Still available

Many Toc H units are seeking to be of service to old people. It is perfectly splendid that so many have been able to stimulate in their community the desire to provide Old Peoples' Clubs. This, however, is not sufficient. More and more men and women will be retiring at an age when they will be healthy enough to enjoy retirement, providing certain conditions are fulfilled. The most important condition that needs to be fulfilled is that they should know that although they are no longer working for their daily bread, they are still contributing to the corporate life of the community in which they live. Therefore any Toc H unit looking at the life of the community of which it is a part ought to recognise that retired old folk whose health is still good will be eager to place their services at the disposal of any who need them. Many of them will be able to do valuable work on the committees which are responsible for social services. We are moving towards a most hygienic state in which well-fed and well-clothed people may discover that loneliness can make of perfect conditions a terrific hell. Superannuated men and women can do much to infuse into such conditions the warmth which springs from right human relationships. Furthermore, there are old people who have skills that they could pass on to young people. I shall not easily forget the sight of a retired carpenter in a certain club surrounded by a group of boys to whom he was passing on his joy in the beauties and possibilities of wood. Nor shall I easily forget the way in which he was able to make his skill available for those who sought, under his guidance, to become skilled craftsmen. It is a fundamental need of a full life that a man should feel that he really matters in the community of which he forms a part.

Linking-up

It ought always to be true that when a unit of Toc H undertakes a job of social service, it recognises at the same time that there are many men and women who would like to experience the thrill that is theirs if they but knew how to link up with like opportunities of service. Thus all Toc H units ought to seek constantly to recruit men who are not of their family to assist them in carrying further any useful work of social service that they have undertaken. We have all known the joy of being of service. We have no right to hug that joy to ourselves. It is the quickest way to that smugness as a result of which some social workers become nauseating to other people.

HERBERT LEGGATE.

Prospect of India

RAJAH D. PAUL ('R.D.') *spoke at a meeting of the Central Executive on November 2. A summarised version of what he said is, by the wish of the Executive, here given to a larger audience.*

EVER SINCE I came into it, ten years ago, Toc H has been my main concern during my leisure hours, for I found in it something which can infuse new spiritual energy into the life of the Christian community and can render great help to the Church in its work of spreading Christian influence into every department of national life. This becomes vastly more important in countries like India and Pakistan where a small Christian community is set in the midst of a preponderant non-Christian population. I am also quite convinced that both the Church and the Christian community in these Dominions need all the help which a high-powered spiritual movement like Toc H can give them in fulfilling their responsibilities to the nation as a whole. The changes consequent on the attainment of Independence by India and Pakistan have made Christianity and Toc H not irrelevant but indispensable to the new situation.



A Family Group. 'R. D.' and Mrs. Paul, together with his father, his seven sons, two daughters, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and two grand-children

Fourfold Aims

We want Toc H in India primarily to help in the spiritual regeneration of the country and its people. Our newly-achieved independence has laid a great responsibility on the nation. Not only has every Indian the responsibility now of making himself worthy of the citizenship of a free democratic state, but the nation as a whole has to prepare itself for taking its due place in the comity of nations. A moral undergirding of the whole national structure now being built up and a leavening of the national life with the spirit of toleration, brotherly love, rectitude in private conduct and integrity in public life (which are all characteristic of a truly Christian culture), is the predominant need of the day. It is the Christian Church, and Toc H within it, that must help the nation in this critical hour of its new-found destiny.

Secondly, Toc H and the Church must now help the nation to organise its welfare activities for the teeming millions of our population. Social service must be undertaken in order to produce citizens worthy of our nation—spiritually alive, mentally alert, economically adequate and physically fit, and

Toc H has to spread the idea that people must be helped for their own sake and because they are the sons, along with us, of the same All-Father and have souls to be redeemed, and personalities to be respected.

Thirdly, India is still a very divided country. It abounds in sects, castes, communities and religious denominations. People have to be taught and helped to overcome these barriers and to begin to feel as one nation and as one community, brothers one to another. Under present conditions the Christian community in India is the only one which can become 'bridge-builders' and draw together these varying and sometimes warring communities and sections. It can do so by demonstrating within itself a fellowship which transcends all dividing lines.

There is then the clamorous need of India's villages and their teeming populations—the need for a new integration of life, a new consciousness of the obligations of citizenship. Lastly, there is the need to help the Government of the day in its efforts to re-organise the country on a basis of more efficient living; and to agitate for greater integrity in public life and in public administration. The Christian community from the vantage point of its greater spiritual healthiness (on the whole), its greater literacy and its admitted capacity for impartial leadership—all acquired by closer intellectual and spiritual contact with the best elements of the Christian West—must and can give the utmost help in this direction. The Christian Church and the Christian community in the country, both Indian and non-Indian, have this great responsibility placed upon them, as at no other time before, to an equal extent. The spirit of Christianity has been recognised, though perhaps not under that name, as the one thing needed for the solution of India's numerous problems.

Change and Chance

Toc H has the greatest chance it has ever had in its history of taking its due place in the life of the Christian community and therefore in the life of the nation. Both the Toc H idea and the Toc H spirit are needed now as at no time before. The composition must necessarily change, as it has already changed

to a large extent. Though there must never be any racial discrimination and distinctions within Toc H, and though there should never be any attempt to make Toc H wholly Indian in composition and in leadership, it is bound to be that Toc H in India will become more and more predominantly Indian. It must also never allow itself to camouflage its Christian character and objective; there should never be any attempt to demand anything but the highest Christian standards of living from the membership. It must, from now on, learn to tackle bigger jobs which will be more widespread in their effects and more relevant to the national life. It must spread—as it has already begun to do—into the villages of India wherein the great majority of the people live and where the conditions need, even more than in the towns, the help which a spiritual movement like Toc H can give.

Three units of Toc H in India and Pakistan (Palamcottah, Bangalore and Lahore) have begun to extend Toc H activities to neighbouring villages. They visit regularly certain nearby villages and, after finding out the local needs, help to get them met in different ways. In some villages thus visited, groups of young men have banded themselves together and want to be recognised as Toc H units. They have started on jobs like the running of night-schools for adults (for the purpose of liquidating illiteracy in the village), looking after the sanitation of the village and such like. Such units, if and when recognised, will not conform to the traditional pattern. The new pattern needs to be seriously thought about and worked out.

Keeping Touch

And last, but not least, Toc H in India must never lose living touch with the movement in other parts of the world. One of its most important jobs will be to help the people of other countries to understand India and this it can do only by keeping its members in close touch with fellow members of Toc H in other countries. It is here that *The Lamp of Toc H* can perform an invaluable function—to interpret India to the outside world, while teaching Toc H to its own people.

It is quite true that Toc H in India and Pakistan can only be directly concerned with that minute proportion of the whole

population which is Christian and which can understand English, and that its membership is very small indeed. Yet even though its present membership, including those on the threshold, is only about 500 (the majority being Indian), Toc H may be said to have been accepted as needed in the life of the Christian community in India, both Indian and non-Indian. There are at present eighteen units actively functioning. But these are so widely scattered throughout the length and breadth of the vast sub-continent that no concerted action by means of a single central committee is possible; and it is almost out of the question to have common gatherings like national festivals. It is also true that, with such a small number of Christians in the country, Toc H in India is not likely to grow numerically large in the near future. But Toc H does not depend on mere numbers for effective functioning. It is, however, equally clear that in order to make its influence felt in the Christian community and in the life of the nation, it must have a larger membership than at present and numerical expansion must be one of the first things to be worked for. The time has therefore come when Toc H in India can no longer function effectively on the spare-time efforts of busy men and we must begin to plan to have our whole-time staff, at least one man, lay or padre, for each of the Regions. Beginnings have already been made in this direction. The South Indian Regional Executive has recently appointed the Rev. J. SELVA RAJ, a Presbyterian of the Church of South India, and an active member of Madras Branch, as the Assistant Regional Secretary. He has been asked not only to run the Headquarters Office in Madras but also to go about visiting the units in the Region and to explore the possibilities of starting new ones. This, I think, is a very wise action on the part of the Regional Executive..

With profound thankfulness to God, I am looking forward with great hope to the future, when I am sure Toc H will play a very worthy part in the life of not only the Christian community, both Indian and non-Indian, but also in the life of the nation as a whole. I am also hoping that when increased man-power becomes available it will be possible for Toc H in India to undertake much bigger jobs for the welfare of the

nation as a whole. We Indians are not a very provident people and do not think much of the financial commitments involved in such a policy and its planning. I am quite convinced that God will provide; if only we make ourselves worthy to receive His gifts and work for His glory and not for our own.

R.D.P.

Remembering India

IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN! And in a typically Toc H way. It seems queer that some eighty men, many of whom had been involuntarily pitchforked into a strange and distant tropic land, should undertake its cause to-day, whilst their memories of it are still largely etched in blood, tears, toil and sweat. But so it is. And furthermore they are strongly reinforced by veterans who have given the best years of their lives to the service of that self-same country.

It happened this-wise. Last year a few Toc H members, who had done war service in India and the Far East, began the task of collecting the names of their erstwhile 'boat-fellows'. The response was so vigorous that a reunion was held on Tower Hill that very autumn, with folk attending from all over the British Isles.

In the course of the meeting it became apparent that this was not just another 'Olde Tyme Get-Together', but that the assembly held a far deeper purpose. Towards its close, although still somewhat in the dark as to that particular purpose, we were led to pledge ourselves in help to the land which is our distinctive common denominator—and to meet again this year.

In the meanwhile, another part of God's design had been unfolded. Alec Churcher sailed to India, to help establish Toc H in its new phase of life and growth in that vast sub-continent. Having journeyed many thousands of miles by sea, land and air, he fetched back here this September complete with Rajaiah D. Paul and a stirring tale to tell.

On Saturday, October 8, we converged anew on Tower Hill, this time conjoined with several disused members of India

Toc H War Services Staff and dogsbodies of a similar order [*speak for yourself*.—ED.]. The overture was complete, and that night (after the usual kind of Toc H jollification), Alec and 'R.D.' got up in turn and spoke what became apparent to many of us as the prologue of one of those little divine dramas which God so often sets amongst us men. Once again the familiar words appeared to be re-echoed, "It seemeth good to the Holy Spirit and to us—", and now, quite simply this. That God would have His own distinctive Member of the Family of Toc H—shaped *in* India, *by* India, *for* India—to fulfil some part of His purpose on behalf of that land, her peoples, and His Church.

Toc H India is our small, courageous brother—an authentic son of a land in which the Christian Church is still a tiny minority. Most of those who belong are sorely wanting in the material things of this world and their need for our help is not easy to be shunned. We, ourselves, left that gathering pledged (many of us in the Sacrament the following morning) to do whatever we could.

Maybe your unit, too, has a prick of concern on their behalf? If so, please write to Alec Churcher at 47 Francis Street, and find out what you can do as well.

RUPERT BLISS.

The Elder Brethren

BARNETT.—On October 14, NOEL SYDNEY BARNETT, aged 55, a member of Whitstable Branch. Elected 23.5.'37.

BEAL.—On September 24, EDWIN CARTER BEAL, aged 66, the Pilot of Kentish Town Branch. Elected 30.6.'32.

DAVIS.—On October 2, in Switzerland, PAUL VYVYAN DAVIS, aged 21, a member of Minehead Branch. Elected 23.9.'46.

ENDACOTT.—On August 3, NORMAN ENDACOTT, aged 73, a former member and late Chairman of Basingstoke Branch. Elected 15.2.'28.

HOLT.—On October 14, KENNETH HOLT, aged 49, a member of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Branch. Elected 14.12.'39.

MACKENZIE.—On October 4, ROBERT ARTHUR MACKENZIE, aged 74, a member of Aylesbury Branch. Elected 1.7.'29.

SARGENT.—On October 29, EDWARD SARGENT, a member of Rainham Branch. Elected 3.3.'33.

TALBOT.—On October 21, the Rev. EDWARD KEBLE TALBOT, aged 71. A close friend of Toc H from the earliest days.

WESTCOTT.—On October 19, Dr. FOSS WESTCOTT, aged 86, formerly Bishop of Calcutta, and greatly loved by Toc H in India.

WILSON.—On July 28, FREDERICK P. WILSON, J.P., aged 78, a member of Middlesbrough Branch. Elected 8.4.'26.

In Memoriam: E. K. Talbot

'Ted Talbot' Neville's elder brother, best known as Superior of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield (where he died last month) from 1922 to 1940, knew Toc H from very early days. He spent the Christmas of 1916 in Talbot House, Poperinghe, with Tubby, and on December 29 wrote to him from H.Q., 8th Division:

I want to say how much I loved being with you at Pop. and breathing the air of Talbot House—the only place on the Front which has kinship with Bethlehem. I only wish I had been able to help your flock better. I was myself in one of the spiritual 'pockets' into which my soul sinks at times, and I fear sadly that it affected my ministrations. . . . However, all that is self-conscious, and I am really grateful to have been with you and with the splendid fellows you have gathered round you. It has been a great stimulus to one's ordinary work. I hope you had a blessed Christmas, and that the Belgian (children's) party went with a roar. . . . Bless you, Tubby.

He continued to keep in touch with the growth of Toc H and, for instance, conducted a weekend, still remembered, at Pierhead House, its pre-war centre in London.

In Memoriam: Dr. Foss Westcott

The former Bishop of Calcutta, the Metropolitan See of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, died at Darjeeling on October 19 at the age of eighty-six. In March, 1942, whilst the Burma retreat was still in progress, Bishop Westcott gave over practically the whole of his house in Calcutta to be run by members of Toc H as the Talbot House Leave Hostel. The Metropolitan himself slept in a bamboo *basha* on the roof. Over fifteen thousand men stayed in that house and have reason to remember the kindness of Bishop Westcott.



JIM and JEANNE STEVENS on the balcony at Hong Kong

Far Cry

Hong Kong

The arrival in England of Jim and Jeanne Stevens is a pleasant reminder of all that Talbot House, Hong Kong, contributes to the life of the colony. These notes refer only to one aspect of the contribution, a boyish one, and Chinese at that.

A surprising number of youth clubs originate from a firm alliance between the Police and Toc H. Hong Kong is an example. In 1935 a few European and Chinese police in the

Colony were troubled about some boys they had collected from the streets. They therefore joined forces with the magistrate and one or two Toc H members to begin the first boys' club. By 1941 the number had grown to twenty, all of which were extinguished by the Japanese occupation.

The number now is twenty-nine, and their members are among the poorest in the whole community. A few of them get some sort of living as shoe-shine boys or hawkers, but most of them have to live on their parents plus their wits. The position, over-simplified, is that they get no work because they get no training, and they get no training because they get no schooling. So the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong is making 'training' its main target for this year, not "training for leadership" as much as plain training to exist.

Among the Sponsored Clubs of the Association is our own Toc H Boys' Club at Wanchai, open Monday to Friday evenings in the Pak Tai Temple. The Club Leader is a student, Ching Wai Tao, and he has thirty-one members on the roll; seven of these are orphans. Their primary need is reflected in the club activities—washing, supper, Chinese arithmetic,



"The girls from a neighbouring club bathe fully clad"

English, general knowledge, P.T., singing, games, stories, summer camps and week-end picnics. Girls from a neighbouring club are also invited to occasional picnics, at which with becoming modesty they bathe fully clad. Hubert Lai, the secretary of the Association, came to London last year.

Colombo

Time was when one used to say "Colombo-and-the-Slave-Island-Club" just as, some years previously, one was prone to say "Yes sir, in Williamammary's reign". It was difficult to think of one without the other. Since then have been added the Galle Face Club and the 18th Colombo (Toc H) Scout Group, and the Pettah Club with the 17th Colombo Group. Away inland are the clubs at Kandy and Kurunegala, and together they form the "Toc H Boys' Clubs, Ceylon", with Frank Knight as the driving force.

The Colombo clubs recently held a week-end rally to which thirty-five Kandy boys came. They were packed in at the Galle Face Club for the night, and hosts were nominated from among Colombo members to welcome them. On the Saturday afternoon there was, of course, football, with the Kandy

Juniors going down with a wallop against the Pettah Juniors, and the Kandy Seniors standing no nonsense from the Galle Face Seniors. About 160 sat down to dinner before going on to the Slave Island Club for the Grand Camp Fire.

It was evidently highly successful. The sort of headings given in *The Spark*, the quarterly Journal of the combined clubs, shows first where the interests of the Asiatic club boy differs from those of the British club boy, for what could sound more mysteriously oriental than these?—ping-pong, cricket, volley ball, rugby, concert party, boxing, canteen, cycling. But of course, there is a difference, if it is only the absence of any apparent partisanship in their Football League Results and commentary, thus:—

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A very good effort—apart from the split infinitive.

Some of the clubs have the sort of weaknesses to be expected in work of this sort; it would be odd if they didn't. Yet what could be friendlier than this extract from the report of the Galle Face Club?—

A grand welcome was accorded to Mr. A. Churcher and Mr. R. C. Kerr on the 4th of May. They were received by a guard of honour led by Mr. E. T. Mariampillai, the R.S.L. We had the honour of getting Mr. Churcher to declare open our newly erected flag mast, by hoisting the Lion Flag. They were then accompanied into the Club and at the entrance were garlanded by R. O. Perera and S. H. Kitchill. Mr. Churcher was highly impressed in seeing

his name and the Toc H Lamp glittering with electric lights at the entrance. This magnificent piece of work was done by R. Sirisena.

Race, Colour and Toc H

Let us grasp the nettle firmly—and intelligently. There are some members of the Christian Church who believe it to be God's will that the black man should be permanently subordinate to the white man because, they say, he belongs to a different human category. They prove it to their own satisfaction by quoting appropriate passages from the Old Testament. There are others who believe that, because in God's eyes all men are of equal value, this equality should be recognised in day-to-day relationships everywhere, and forthwith—it is just as simple as that. What would be a responsible Toc H attitude to this most prickly problem? A handful of experienced members, living approximately within the tropical belt from the West Indies to the Far East, have given us their carefully considered views. Here is an extract from one letter. The writer is Judge Tredgold of Bulawayo, for years Chairman of Toc H in Rhodesia.

It is impossible to give a general answer to the question as to whether the fellowship should include Africans now. It must be accepted at the outset that racial discrimination is contrary to the Christian basis of Toc H. But there is an enormous difference between the stage of advancement of the African in different countries and it would be idle not to recognise this fact in the practical approach. In the more advanced countries, and as each country advances, there is no reason why both races should not be admitted to the fellowship. In the less advanced countries there are good reasons to the contrary. Where the African is very undeveloped and the line of cleavage between the races is strongly marked, the effect of full participation might easily defeat the all important objectives which Toc H can serve. It would alienate many Europeans whose desire to help and serve the African is unbounded. It would attract many Africans, who had no real sympathy with the movement or understanding of it, simply by virtue of the desire to belong to an organisation with a membership common to the two races. It may be argued that this is a policy of expediency and not of principle, and that Toc H should give a lead to the Europeans. But leadership fails where the leaders pass completely beyond the comprehension of the led, and it involves no sacrifice of the ultimate objective to recognise that it can only be achieved one step at a

time. Moreover, in dealing with backward people, as with children, it does not help them to give them privileges which are liable to be misunderstood. Christianity demands that we should recognise the brotherhood of man irrespective of race or colour, and the obligations which flow from such brotherhood. It is right that Toc H should clear its own mind and examine its own conscience on the subject but there is a real danger in an approach that is too theoretical. A great opportunity and a vast field of endeavour lies obviously open before the movement in Africa. It is hardly unfair to suggest that, whilst the investigation of the principles involved is almost interminable, the field of practical service lies almost unrecognised. My own belief is that it would be more akin to the genius of Toc H to go out into the vineyard and to leave the reckoning till the evening. G.M.

Supper Party

When I received an invitation from Saffron Walden Branch to attend a Toc H Supper and "speak briefly on Toc H", I had no idea of the real nature of the banquet.

On arrival I was taken to the dining room of the local Trust House and found long tables set in 'hollow square' with a board showing the plan of seating and flanked by a Toc H literature stall. Instead of slips of card to indicate the places, the Branch Programme folder was used, so that everyone picked up a guide to meeting nights of their hosts for the next six months.

The supper was for men only, and the Branch bore the cost, members paying a modest sum towards the charge for their own meal. Originally the thought had been to bring together those who had known the Branch in the past, but the idea developed into an attempt to interest men in its future. Invited guests were local dignitaries, men who had assisted Toc H in jobs, speakers who had addressed the Branch, or were going to do so and, of course, local Toc H Builders.

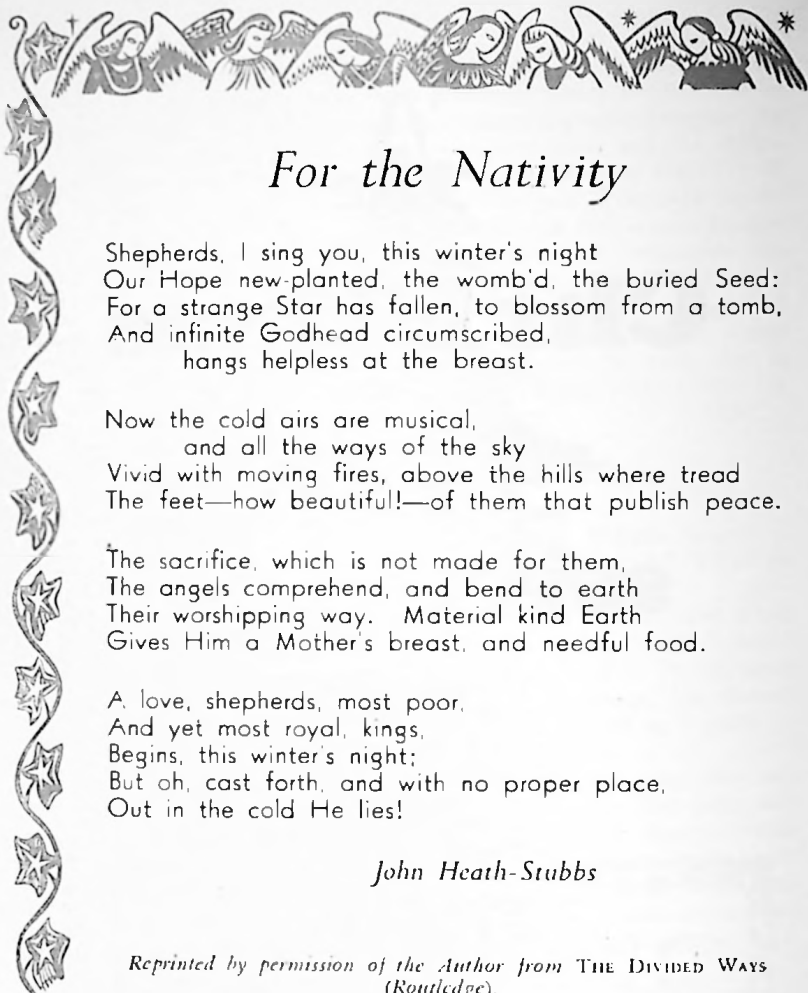
The arrangements bore evidence of careful planning and organising. The Chairman welcomed guests in a brief speech to which the Mayor replied. 'Light' was taken by the Pilot, preceded by a short well-prepared explanation. Musical and light entertainment struck a note of friendly fun. The Press was there and a photo was taken. The affair ended quite naturally with Homegoing Prayers led by the Vicar—the Branch Padre. One could not help knowing one's table neighbours well after such a jolly meal, and it is hoped that the guests, in turn, knew Toc H better thereafter.



The Christmas Tree SUPPLEMENT

"The Christmas Tree is not indigenous here, and was quite unknown in England till the nineteenth century . . . The candle-lit tree and the carols are now, surely, the best loved ingredients of a festival that is better kept than at any time since the Commonwealth."

Laurence Whistler, *The English Festivals*.



For the Nativity

Shepherds, I sing you, this winter's night
Our Hope new-planted, the womb'd, the buried Seed:
For a strange Star has fallen, to blossom from a tomb,
And infinite Godhead circumscribed,
hangs helpless at the breast.

Now the cold airs are musical,
and all the ways of the sky
Vivid with moving fires, above the hills where tread
The feet—how beautiful!—of them that publish peace.

The sacrifice, which is not made for them,
The angels comprehend, and bend to earth
Their worshipping way. Material kind Earth
Gives Him a Mother's breast, and needful food.

A love, shepherds, most poor,
And yet most royal, kings,
Begins, this winter's night;
But oh, cast forth, and with no proper place,
Out in the cold He lies!

John Heath-Stubbs

*Reprinted by permission of the Author from THE DIVIDED WAYS
(Routledge).*





Change for Christmas

CONVALESCENCE can be quite a pleasant existence, and I was enjoying being at home again after a couple of months in hospital. I had really been pretty ill, and in fact one of the doctors had said that I was lucky to be alive. An infernally rude chap, I thought him; for he had ticked me off for making a perfectly justifiable complaint about the food. However, that was all over; and I was back in my own room and in my own bed. Still feeling very weak, I had told my wife Ann that I didn't want to be disturbed.

It was evening, and I was half-asleep, watching the fire-light flickering on the wall. Suddenly I felt that someone had entered the room. Why couldn't Ann see to it that I wasn't disturbed? And, whoever it was, why couldn't he come out from behind the screen? "Who's there?" I called. But there was no answer; and I couldn't see or hear anyone. "Who's there?" Where the devil was Ann? "Ann! Ann!" Confound it all, this wasn't the way to treat a sick man. I was certain there was someone with me, and I didn't like it a bit. Unnerving; that's what it was, unnerving. I called for Ann again, but she didn't answer. Listening, I supposed, to the nine o'clock News. Selfish of her, when I might want her. The certainty that someone was in the room and the silence was getting on my nerves. The shock might cause a serious relapse. Confound whoever it was playing this fool trick.

"How are you, James?"

I could hear the voice distinctly, but I couldn't see anyone. "Who—who are you?" I stammered. "Who let you in? Why are you hiding behind the screen? Who are you?"

"You wouldn't know me, James. You haven't had anything to do with me for many years. But how are you?"

"I'm—I'm better. In fact, I'll soon be alright. But who the devil are you?"





Not the devil. Who I am can wait. So you're better?"
"Yes, I am. But I shall be worse if this sort of thing happens. It's positively disgraceful..."

"Stop grumbling, James, and listen to me. Are you a contented man?"

"I don't know who you are, and I can't see why I should answer these impertinent questions. Please leave me alone".

"Oh, I can't do that. It wouldn't be fair. But suppose you answer my question. Are you a contented man?"

"Well, I've done pretty well. I'm a self-made man."

"As a certain Doctor Parker once said, that removes a grievous burden from the Almighty."

"Here, what are you getting at?"

"You, James. So you're a self-made man. Are you proud of what you've made?"

"I've told you I've done pretty well for myself."

"So you did. Do you remember Dick Atkinson?"

"Of course I do. He was my partner."

"Yes, he was. And you bought him out by means of playing a very dirty trick on him."

"I deny that. It was just ordinary business. If I'm sharper than the other fellow, that's his funeral. I've been strictly honest in business."

"What about your dealings on the black market, James."

"Oh, well, everybody did that."

"Everybody did not. Stop trying to make excuses. You're running away from the facts."

"Running away? I've never run away from anything in my life."

"How is Molly, James?"

"Molly? How do you know anything about Molly? Who are you?"

"You ran away from Molly, when you got bored with her. Did you know she had a child and that it died?"

"I—I heard some vague rumours, but it doesn't do to believe all you hear. Anyhow, other men have done the same thing."



"James, James, you'll get nowhere like this. Except where you don't want to go. Look at yourself. A good look. While there's time."

"What do you mean, while there's time? I'm better, and I'm only fifty. I've got at least another twenty years in front of me."

"Are you sure that you have any?"

"Look, here, you must tell me who you are. What are you trying to say to me? I'm not a fool. Are you trying to tell me that I'm—that I'm..."

"Dead, James? In ways you've been dead for years. You were bound to be. It's always so when people have nothing to do with me. What do you believe about death?"

"I don't believe anything about it. Only fools do. When I die, I die. And that's the end of it. Heaven and hell and all that nonsense—they were only invented to keep people quiet. No sensible man believes in them to-day."

"Don't bluster, James. Are you quite sure you don't?"

"I was until you came here and tried to confuse me. You've made everything so difficult. I can't believe I'm dead. And yet... it's all so odd. I can't see you, and yet we're talking. And why should I carry on this conversation when I don't want to? Who are you? That's what's really worrying me. I'm beginning to think I did once know you, but it was a long time ago."

"It was a long time ago. You stopped having anything to do with me when you were about seventeen. Lots of people do. You'll remember who I am when we've finished our talk. But I'd like to ask you another question. Do you believe in people?"

"Not me! There's only one person I trust, and that myself."

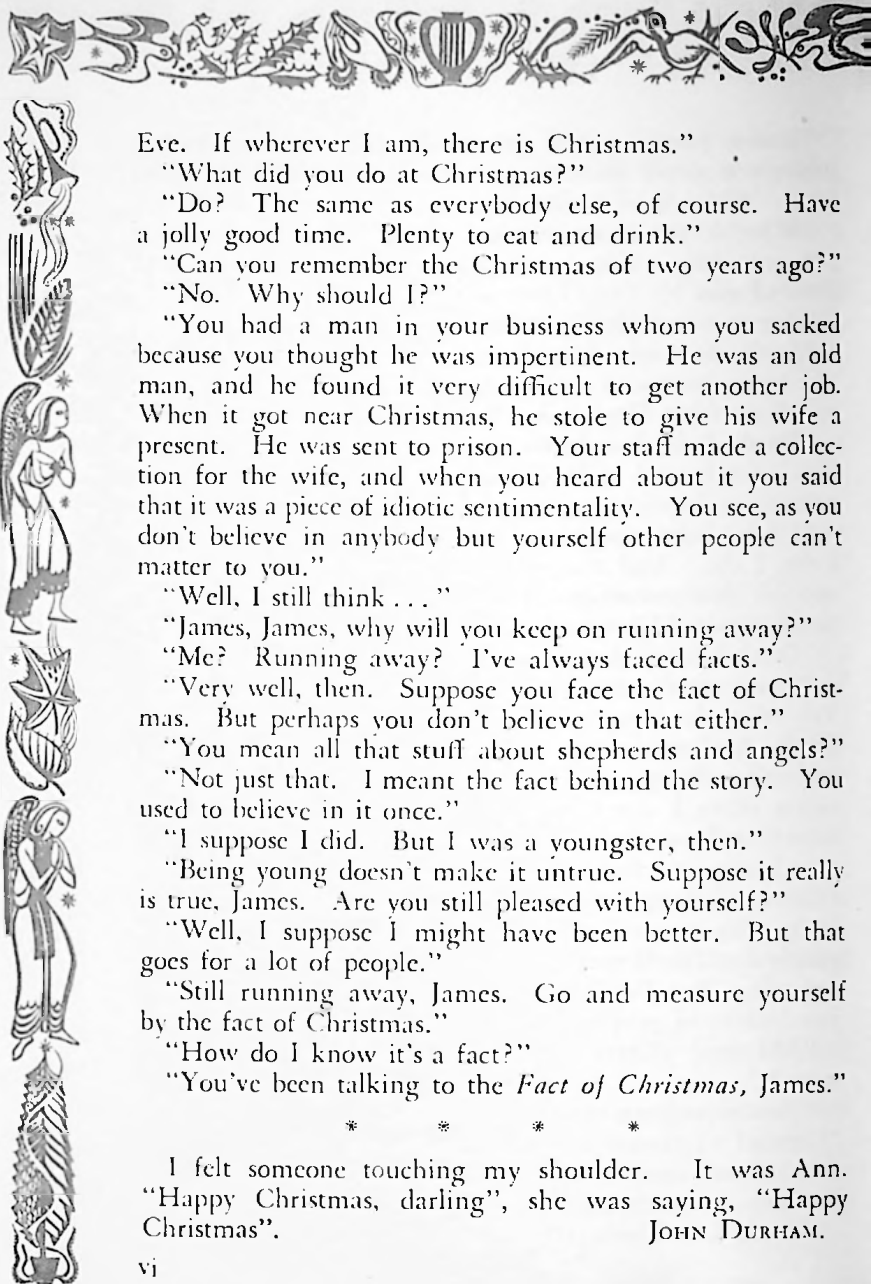
"You must have been very lonely."

"Lonely! I'm not lonely. I've crowds of friends. You should have seen my house at Christmas."

"Why do you mention Christmas?"

"Well, I suddenly remembered that to-day's Christmas





Eve. If wherever I am, there is Christmas."

"What did you do at Christmas?"

"Do? The same as everybody else, of course. Have a jolly good time. Plenty to eat and drink."

"Can you remember the Christmas of two years ago?"

"No. Why should I?"

"You had a man in your business whom you sacked because you thought he was impertinent. He was an old man, and he found it very difficult to get another job. When it got near Christmas, he stole to give his wife a present. He was sent to prison. Your staff made a collection for the wife, and when you heard about it you said that it was a piece of idiotic sentimentality. You see, as you don't believe in anybody but yourself other people can't matter to you."

"Well, I still think . . ."

"James, James, why will you keep on running away?"

"Me? Running away? I've always faced facts."

"Very well, then. Suppose you face the fact of Christmas. But perhaps you don't believe in that either."

"You mean all that stuff about shepherds and angels?"

"Not just that. I meant the fact behind the story. You used to believe in it once."

"I suppose I did. But I was a youngster, then."

"Being young doesn't make it untrue. Suppose it really is true, James. Are you still pleased with yourself?"

"Well, I suppose I might have been better. But that goes for a lot of people."

"Still running away, James. Go and measure yourself by the fact of Christmas."


"How do I know it's a fact?"

"You've been talking to the *Fact of Christmas*, James."

* * * *

I felt someone touching my shoulder. It was Ann. "Happy Christmas, darling", she was saying, "Happy Christmas".

JOHN DURHAM.



Branch Crackers



THE CHAIRMAN.

*To H chairmen are a puzzle,
Some we think should wear a muzzle.
Much preferred's the simple bloke,
Who tempers 'business' with a joke.*

THE PADRE.

*His voice at weekly meetings
Is only seldom heard,
But when he is 'the Speaker',
It's "church militant", my word !*



THE TREASURER.

*The man who takes our money,
Whether lean, or plump and round,
Would find the joke quite funny,
If the Branch raised £ for pound.*

THE JOBMASER.

*Tho' all the hands are busy,
And doing jobs galore,
Our Jobbie's never satisfied,
But still looks round for more.*



THE PILOT.

*His talk isn't mainly of 'Pop',
Or what happened ages ago;
Unshaken, tho' finest plans flop,
He remains a 'strong-man' in the show.*

THE SECRETARY.

*If they should make you Secretary,
Then you'll need a dictionary,
Because one's spelling, as a rule,
Deteriorates when we've left skule.*





When
We were
Very
Young



2 Might well be the original of 'Bubbles'



I An up and coming cricketer of the 90's.

While turning the Album we discovered portraits of well taken at an early Toc H staff. Can

KE
N, Chief Accountant.
N, Editorial Secretary.
E, Administrator.
TON, Founder Padre



*From
the
Family
Album*

3 Serene and trusting,
with an easy balance.

ges of the Family
ed these four
own members
before joining
identify them?

1. 'TUBBY' C
2. HAROLD H
3. BARCLAY B
4. JACK HARRI



4 Rather a tough cus-
tomer by all accounts
ix





*Scottish Carol, already old when printed in
"Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spiritual
Songs," Edinburgh, 1621,*

Ane sang of the birth of Christ

I come from hevin to tell
The best nowellis that ever befell;
To yow this tythings trew I bring
And I will of them say and sing.

This day to yow is borne ane childe
Of Marie meeke and Virgine mylde,
That blissit barne, bining and kynde,
Sall yow rejoyce baith heart and mynde.

My saull and lyfe, stand up and see
Quha lyes in ane cribe of tree,
Quhat babe is that, so gude and faire?
It is Christ, God's sonne and aire.

O God! that made all creature,
How art thow becum so pure,
That on the hay and straw will lye,
Among the asses, oxin and kye?





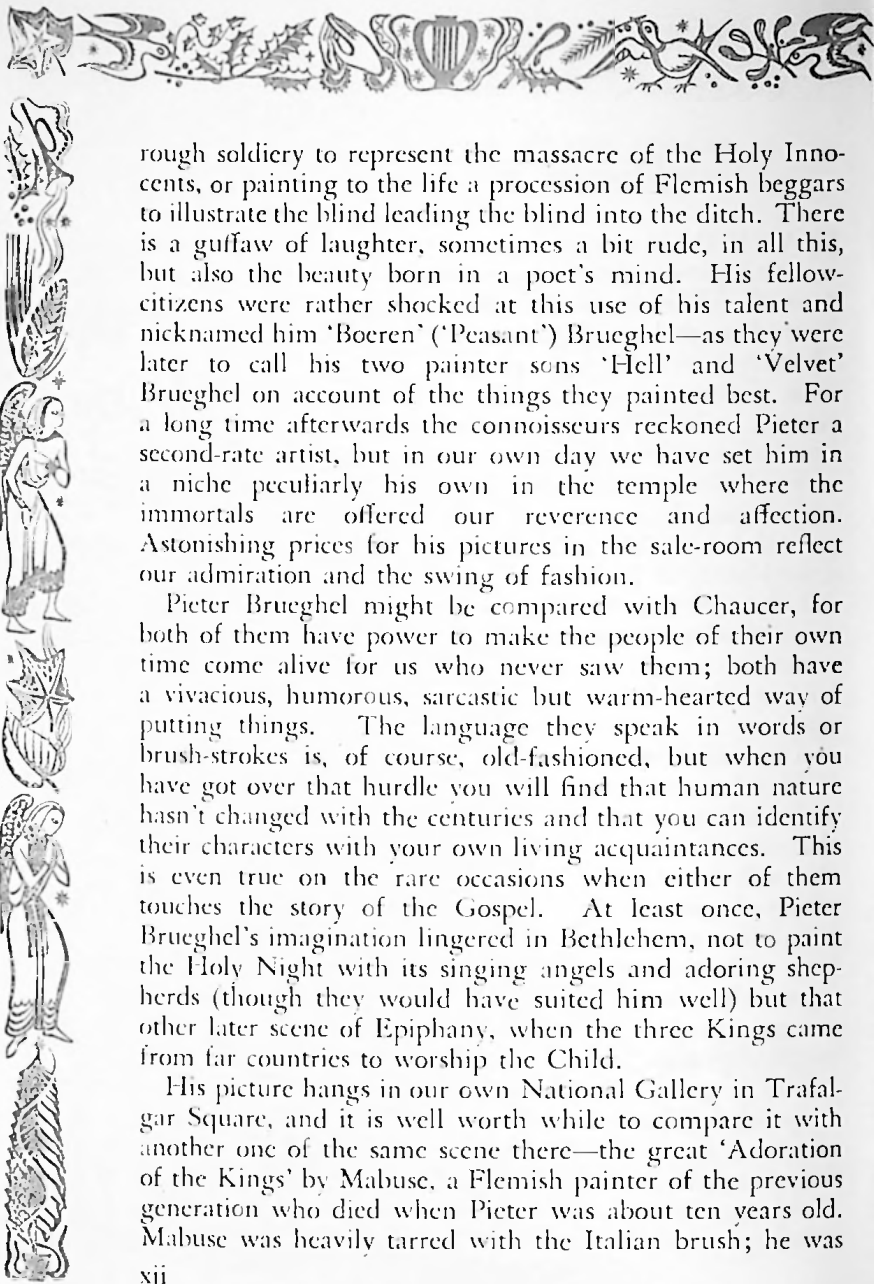
Down to Earth

FASHION is always fickle, but nowhere more than in books and pictures and music; the things any particular generation likes to read, to look at and to listen to. When Pieter Brueghel was born in Flanders about 1525 Italy was all the rage with the Flemish painters and those who bought their pictures. So when Pieter grew up to be a young painter, to Italy he went as a matter of course to complete his studies. He may have come home with his head full of fine buildings and classical legends, richly-dressed sitters and elegant Italian madonnas, but when he sat down to paint they never intruded upon his canvas, as they did, rather second-hand, in the pictures of his popular contemporaries. All that his journey visibly gave him was a memory of Alpine valleys he had seen on the way. He used these sometimes to add romance to the flat-country of his homeland in which he worked henceforth until his death about 1569.

A homely homeland, as anyone knows who has ever been in Flanders, and a homely-looking people, given to eating and drinking in a big way, to smoking clay pipes (a vice that came in after Brueghel) and letting themselves go, as they still do, at the annual village fair, the *kermesse*, with plenty of noise and rough humour. Moreover Pieter's life-time fell in a tough and warring age, when men hunted the boar with spears, when people made love crudely in their cups, when beggars were bold and armed bands held citizens to ransom and villages for pillage. You needed a sound digestion and a sense of humour, preferably a bit coarse, to stand up to it.

So Pieter Brueghel sat down to it and began to paint it all with a grand zest. He transfigured the life of everyday Flanders with the touch of true genius that was his, turning a country 'beano' or a party of children skating on the village pond into an entrancing picture, using a raid by





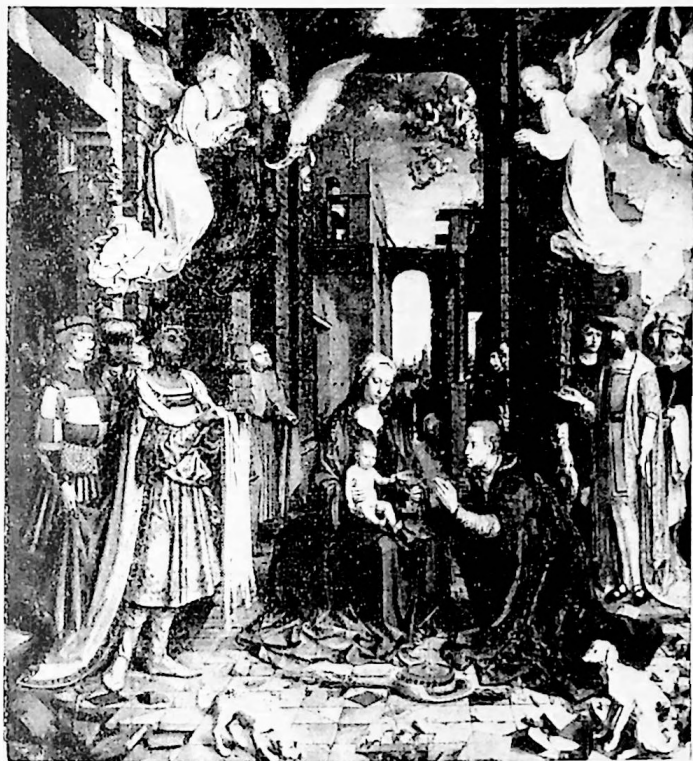
rough soldiery to represent the massacre of the Holy Innocents, or painting to the life a procession of Flemish beggars to illustrate the blind leading the blind into the ditch. There is a guffaw of laughter, sometimes a bit rude, in all this, but also the beauty born in a poet's mind. His fellow-citizens were rather shocked at this use of his talent and nicknamed him 'Boeren' ('Peasant') Brueghel—as they were later to call his two painter sons 'Hell' and 'Velvet' Brueghel on account of the things they painted best. For a long time afterwards the connoisseurs reckoned Pieter a second-rate artist, but in our own day we have set him in a niche peculiarly his own in the temple where the immortals are offered our reverence and affection. Astonishing prices for his pictures in the sale-room reflect our admiration and the swing of fashion.

Pieter Brueghel might be compared with Chaucer, for both of them have power to make the people of their own time come alive for us who never saw them; both have a vivacious, humorous, sarcastic but warm-hearted way of putting things. The language they speak in words or brush-strokes is, of course, old-fashioned, but when you have got over that hurdle you will find that human nature hasn't changed with the centuries and that you can identify their characters with your own living acquaintances. This is even true on the rare occasions when either of them touches the story of the Gospel. At least once, Pieter Brueghel's imagination lingered in Bethlehem, not to paint the Holy Night with its singing angels and adoring shepherds (though they would have suited him well) but that other later scene of Epiphany, when the three Kings came from far countries to worship the Child.

His picture hangs in our own National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, and it is well worth while to compare it with another one of the same scene there—the great 'Adoration of the Kings' by Mabuse, a Flemish painter of the previous generation who died when Pieter was about ten years old. Mabuse was heavily tarred with the Italian brush; he was



one of the generation of Flemish painters that started that fashion. The scene in the stable is all rich and smooth and elegant for him. Mary's robe is carefully and consciously arranged, the processions of the Kings are splendidly dressed and the Kings themselves look like portraits of



The Adoration of the Kings

Mabuse

wealthy Flemish notables. The flying angels, with hands folded in a conventional attitude, are well-groomed, their gowns beautifully laundered. The 'stable' is the neat ruin of a very large house, an elaborate stage 'set'. The dogs

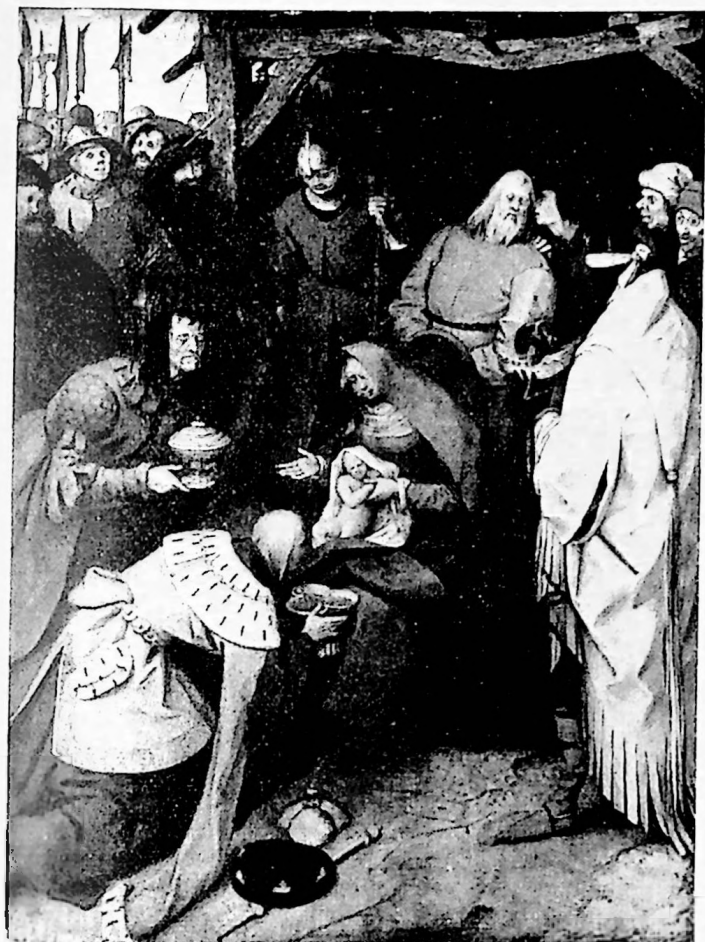




(one pinched direct from an engraving of German Dürer) and flowers are marvellously painted. It is a very lovely pageant, but a long way from Bethlehem.

Now look at Pieter's picture—a startling event, a miracle, in a village in Flanders. The very plain peasant Mother, shy and closely hooded, does the honours with all the native grace she possesses; her Child is very shy too and clings to her protecting hand. There is no southern elegance about the Madonna's dress: there she sits at the entrance of a real farm shed, in the dim light of which a real donkey, unheeding the strange event outside, pulls hay from a manger. Strange indeed is the visit of these three outlandish men, kings without crowns. The oldest of them (Gaspar is his traditional name) kneels to offer a golden bowl—full of who knows what?—to the very human heavenly Child. One long ermine-trimmed sleeve of his robe is tucked out of the way into the back of his belt; his sceptre, jewelled hat and the trefoil lid of his bowl lie on the ground. Stooping forward with his gift, awaiting his turn, is Melchior, very haggard and dishevelled after his journey. The strangest figure of the three, Balthasar the coal-black moor, stands on the right; he will kneel last of the three. His face, so dark that it is hard to make out in the original picture and well-nigh impossible in the photograph, wears an expression of comic astonishment. He is dressed in a slashed winter overcoat, some sizes too big, is booted and spurred and carries a most intricate gift in his hands—a gold model of a ship, loaded with a jewelled nautilus shell, out of the mouth of which creeps no shell-fish but the tiny head and shoulders of a man, pushing forward a magnificent precious stone. The Holy Family is completed by St. Joseph, an old bearded man in a thick padded coat, who stands behind his wife. And what is one of the neighbours whispering into his ear? We long to know.

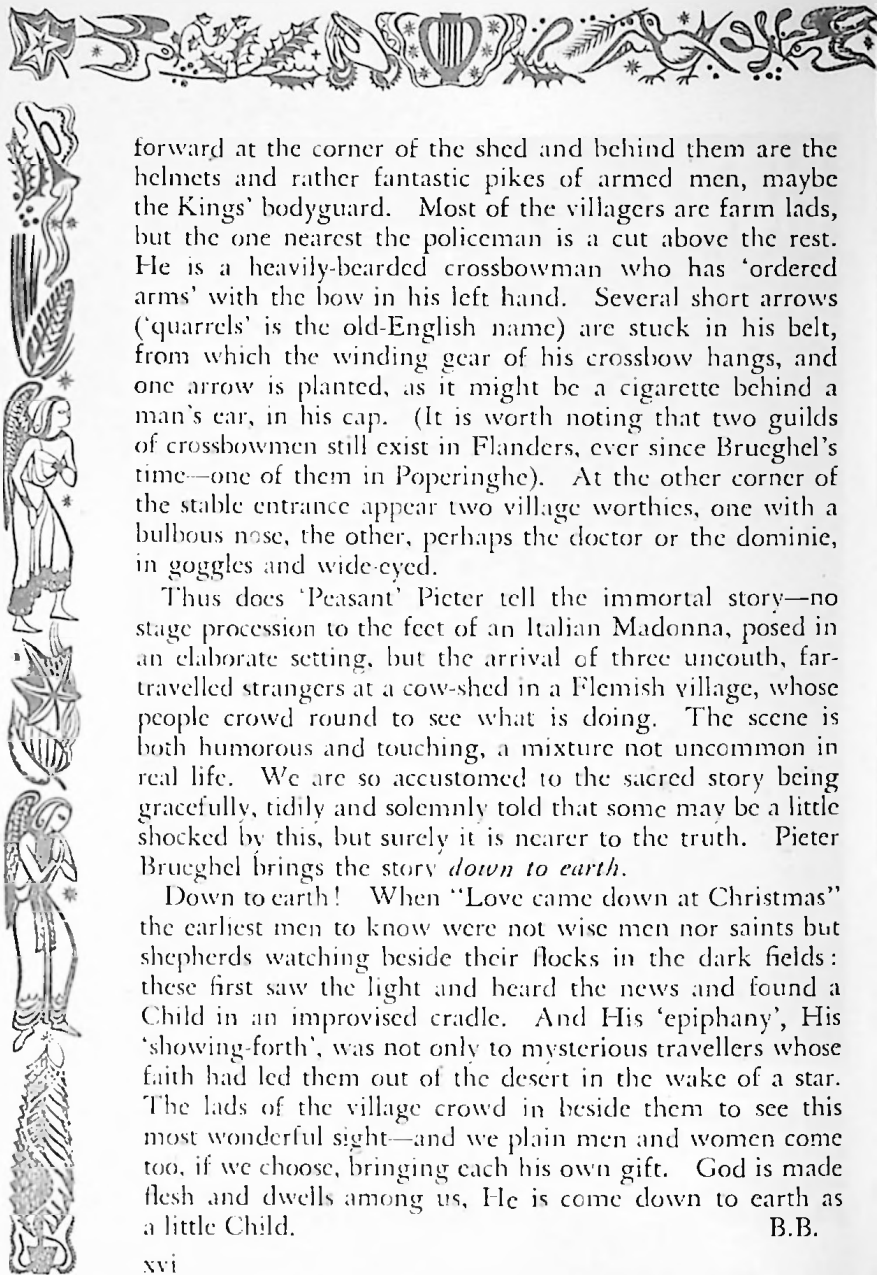
Then there is the crowd. The principal figure, rightly enough, is the village constable with his helmet, steel gloves



The Adoration of the Kings Pieter Brueghel

and halberd, who is clearly on duty beside St. Joseph. A moment ago he was standing at attention but now he can't help leaning forward, his eyes popping out of his head, to get a sight of Gaspar's gift. The men of Bethlehem press





forward at the corner of the shed and behind them are the helmets and rather fantastic pikes of armed men, maybe the Kings' bodyguard. Most of the villagers are farm lads, but the one nearest the policeman is a cut above the rest. He is a heavily-bearded crossbowman who has 'ordered arms' with the bow in his left hand. Several short arrows ('quarrels' is the old-English name) are stuck in his belt, from which the winding gear of his crossbow hangs, and one arrow is planted, as it might be a cigarette behind a man's ear, in his cap. (It is worth noting that two guilds of crossbowmen still exist in Flanders, ever since Brueghel's time—one of them in Poperinghe). At the other corner of the stable entrance appear two village worthies, one with a bulbous nose, the other, perhaps the doctor or the dominie, in goggles and wide-eyed.

Thus does 'Peasant' Pieter tell the immortal story—no stage procession to the feet of an Italian Madonna, posed in an elaborate setting, but the arrival of three uncouth, far-travelled strangers at a cow-shed in a Flemish village, whose people crowd round to see what is doing. The scene is both humorous and touching, a mixture not uncommon in real life. We are so accustomed to the sacred story being gracefully, tidily and solemnly told that some may be a little shocked by this, but surely it is nearer to the truth. Pieter Brueghel brings the story *down to earth*.

Down to earth! When "Love came down at Christmas" the earliest men to know were not wise men nor saints but shepherds watching beside their flocks in the dark fields: these first saw the light and heard the news and found a Child in an improvised cradle. And His 'epiphany', His 'showing-forth', was not only to mysterious travellers whose faith had led them out of the desert in the wake of a star. The lads of the village crowd in beside them to see this most wonderful sight—and we plain men and women come too, if we choose, bringing each his own gift. God is made flesh and dwells among us, He is come down to earth as a little Child.

B.B.

Multum in Parvo

✚ The Annual Meeting of the CENTRAL COUNCIL will be held at Guildhall in the City of London on Saturday and Sunday, April 22 and 23, 1950. Central Councillors have been asked to let the General Secretary have notices of motion and nominations of candidates for the Central Executive for 1950/51, by February 28.

✚ The big national event for Toc H in 1950 will be the FESTIVAL in November. One Branch has booked a coach for any Saturday, although the actual date cannot be fixed until the booking of halls, etc., is possible.

✚ In preparation for the Festival, some Branches may find they want to have BANNERS made, in which case they should first refer to pages 53-54 of "*The Toc H Signpost*". Local production is strongly recommended.

✚ Branch Executives in the U.K. are asked to ensure that their BRANCH MEMBERS' ROLLS are sent to their Area Secretaries or H.A.C's. during this month or by mid-January at latest. On receipt at Headquarters of one copy of each Roll showing the Branch Members in good standing for 1950, current Membership Cards will be issued.

✚ GORDON LAWES has left Singapore after ten months among the troops in MALAYA and is returning home with his wife from Adelaide, South Australia.

✚ The Rev. S. R. (BOB) BOLTON, of Wolverton, Bucks, is to be appointed to the Staff of Toc H and will become South-Western Area Padre in February. Over ten years will have elapsed since it was possible for a whole-time padre to be posted to that Area.

✚ Miss HELEN BENBOW, formerly General Secretary of Toc H (Women's Section) and seconded to Toc H in war-time to organise the Toc H Clubs for Women in the Services, went to Australia in 1947 and there did great work for the Women's Section. Having had to forego a visit to New Zealand owing to illness, she returned home last February and now, happily recovered, is working at Toc H Headquarters as Assistant to the General Secretary.

Christianity & History

I WISH I had a readier pen. I would give much to be able to persuade those members of Toc H who read few books to read this particular one.* They would find it a most refreshing experience. At first glance they might be disposed to lay the book aside and believe that it was for the academic historian. This would be a mistake. It is very definitely written so that wayfaring men may understand. I would like to commend it also to ideologists amongst our membership, whether of the right or the left. I can think of few books that would be more likely to give them a true perspective.

Professor Butterfield is Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge and so speaks with authority as a technical historian. He is also a Christian whose faith has been illuminated by the study of history. Too often Christians have been fearful of scholarship as though they believed that its findings could invalidate their faith. They ought rather to welcome eagerly any contribution that the scholar is able to make since all truth is the truth of God. In this book Professor Butterfield deals faithfully with those Christian apologists who seek to claim for the Christian church credit for every advance in social righteousness. He draws attention to the fact that "so many of the things which the twentieth century now prizes so much may have been born of Christian charity in the last resort but they often had to fight the dominant voice in the Church and establish their footing in history too often as an anti-Christian movement". He deals equally faithfully with that view of history which tends to leave out of account what he calls the "gravitational pull" which so often results in nations which have won a victory against evil things being destroyed from within by the very evil things against which they have fought. As a technical historian he is quite clear that history is the sphere through which God expresses Himself and His purposes and that human sinfulness in both men and nations accounts for the manner in which each successive Utopia disappoints and mocks its creators. "We

* *Christianity & History*. By Herbert Butterfield (Bell, 7s. 6d.).

create tragedy after tragedy for ourselves by a lazy unexamined doctrine of men which is come among us and which the study of history does not support. It is essential *not* to have faith in human nature". I commend readers who may be shocked by this statement to read the book. I am quite certain that they will be convinced that this is an aspect of the truth which ideologists too often overlook. History teaches what the world lacks is not so much good plans for a better world but good men. Without good men the best planned world can soon become another variation of Hell.

I will end with the closing words of the book: "We are told by many people that each new age needs a new mentality but so often, when one reads these writers further, all that they really say is that if we do not do now the things they have been continually telling us to do since 1919, we shall have the atomic bomb and presumably deserve it. I have nothing to say at the finish except that if one wants a permanent Rock in life and goes deep enough for it, it is difficult for historical events to shake it. There are times when we can never meet the future with sufficient elasticity of mind especially if we are locked in the contemporary systems of thought. We can do worse than remember a principle which both gives us a firm Rock and leaves us the maximum elasticity for our minds: the principle; Hold to Christ and for the rest be wholly uncommitted."

I am not a historian but I have found this book both exciting and inspiring. For this reason I warmly commend it.

H.L.

Introduction to Worship

XX **V**WE MAY NOT BELIEVE that the contemporary world is morally worse than the Victorian world. We may say that the only difference is that now, freed of inhibitions, we expose our sins whereas before they were hidden under a cover of hypocrisy. At any rate we must agree that this is a time when we live at an intolerable rate. We must agree that it has never been more difficult to "Be still and know that I am God".

Stillness is the last thing to be sought. We are continually being admonished to work harder, to play harder, to think harder, never to be still. But as members of Toc H we have pledged ourselves to "listen now, and always for the voice of God". Listening is a positive act; it is one aspect of worship.

Man has always worshipped. First he worshipped Nature, turning next to the many gods of the ancients and then, because of revelation to Israel, Man came to see the One God. The God who through Christ made Himself fully known to Man. To Christians the approach to the Throne is always by Christ. Only in Christ do we dare to seek the face of God.

To Anglicans (and this book* is primarily for Anglicans) the great act of worship is the Eucharist. Fr. Barnes deals at length with this Sacrament. His words here can help us to find a reality and a meaning in the Communion service, of which all too often we are not fully conscious. This is the most valuable part of the book. The other sections while containing much profitable thought have not been expanded as they might well have been.

If anyone will use this book—not read it but use it—the deepening of the Spiritual Life that must result may well lead to a New Birth in Christ.

J.D.B.

A System to Assist 'Em

ONCE UPON A TIME at a place called Accrington, which is situated in a distant and remote part of this island, there dwelt a Branch of the Tribe of Toc H. This small Branch of the tribe having survived twenty-one years of difficulty and danger had reached the time when a tribal festivity should be held, which in those parts is known as a "twenty-one do". The celebration was planned with great care and on the great day brother tribesmen from distant parts, friends, relations, His Worship the Mayor, "The Press", yea and even "The Press Photographer", attended

* *An Introduction to Worship*. By the Rev. R. L. Barnes (Mowbray 2s. 6d.). Copies obtainable direct from Toc H Headquarters.

this celebration. For even "The Press" has penetrated that remote region, and reports and pictures appeared in the local news.

Now all this led this Branch of the tribe into ways of wickedness. Indeed they became very pleased with themselves, and instructed the tribal scribe to write an account of their doings and to purchase pictures from "The Press" and send these things to "The JOURNAL" which is published by the Big Chiefs of the Tribe so that all men may know of this and that. Now the scribe was secretly very pleased at this, specially at the idea of sending the photograph because the scribe was bang in the middle of the picture. And although one of his brothers had said "Truly thou lookest like an amiable bunny rabbit", he was still pleased. Such was his vanity.

With much thought and pen sucking the scribe wrote his story, then seeking the favour of a young goddess with red finger nails, had it typed in duplicate, one of which was placed with great ceremony amongst other tribal documents, such as District Team Minutes, *The Brazen News*, etc. And so it came to pass, the other copy was packed with picture and even stamps enclosed so that at least the picture might be returned, for this had cost the treasurer hard-obtained money, and all this was dispatched to the Big Chiefs in the Great City.

Then the tribesmen waited for the next JOURNAL and there was nothing. They waited eagerly for the next JOURNAL—still there was nothing. They waited *anxiously* for the next and . . . nothing. And the scribe's work did not return from whence it had gone. And the tribesmen muttered in their beards and looked sideways at the scribe and questioned him closely saying:—

"Did you post it?"

"Did you put stamps on?"

"Sure you addressed it?"

"What have you done with the money?"

So the scribe lost face and became melancholy and went into a corner and chewed his Toc H tie.

By a strange coincidence about this time a certain member

of this tribe, called John, decided to seek adventure in the Great City. So taking a bag of gold from the old oak chest, he gathered his family around him and joined a caravan which journeyed south. When he returned after many days his fellows bade him tell them of the marvellous things he had seen. And he did. Now John told of his arrival in the Great City whereupon he first put his bag of gold in a safe place, then he put his family in another safe place, after which he donned his gayest raiment and went forth that all may see him. Presently his wandering steps brought him to the house which is called Forty Seven, wherein the Big Chiefs dwell, and remembering the story of the scribe's missing script, he went in to question them. For John being in the service called Min. of Ag. and Fish. is well used to bearding lions in their dens. And John told how he was received with great politeness and shown all there was to see, of how there was efficiency, order and system beyond all praise. But they knew not the scribe's script. Then John speaking sternly to the scribe, said "Write another letter, this time making no mistake, for yonder is system". And the scribe did as he was told. The days passed into weeks, the weeks into months, and still there was nothing.

[Asst. Ed.: *They must be using a different calendar to us.*

Ed.: *Hush, don't be pernicketty, this is ART!*]

Then one day one of the smaller chiefs from the lesser City visited the tribe. He was a long and lanky bloke who looked like one of Cromwell's soldiers, and the tribe told him all these things and he was much puzzled. He rubbed his round head vigorously and pondered for a space, then from the depths of his wisdom he uttered these profound words—"It's beyond me", and the Branch cried with one voice "And How".

Such is the story of the missing script which has no solution, but the men mutter amongst themselves, the treasurer grieveth for his money, the scribe grieveth for his script, and John grieveth for the system.

F.V.

Branch Briefs

- Entertainments, organised by PORT ISAAC, Cornwall, during the holiday season have realised sufficient funds to provide all local old-age pensioners with a Christmas Tea and a present.
- Inspired by a DROITWICH member, a visit by Manchester United F.C. team to the Forelands Crippled Children's Hospital was a huge success and made the youngsters deliriously happy.
- As a Discussion Forum of topical subjects, ST. ALBANS have opened their meetings to town residents. At 9.30 p.m. the Branch take over and visitors can remain if they wish.
- A one-act play, "The Old Bull" was included in a "Fire-side Varieties" programme put on by WIMBORNE for two successive evenings in October.
- Complete charge of a wedding was taken by EDGBASTON when two elderly members of their Blind Club decided to marry. Members provided cars and arranged the entire reception at Branch headquarters.
- A Fête organised at Wilton by SALISBURY PLAIN District Team resulted in the raising of over £55 for Toc H funds.
- A mock trial, with Toc H as prisoner-at-the-bar, was a feature at ANSTEY (Leicester) twenty-first birthday celebration.
- The Blind Fellowship sponsored by RUISLIP has received a keen response from blind and partly-sighted people. Members are greatly impressed by their guests' outstanding cheerfulness.
- A big effort is being made by MILL HILL to obtain a 16 mm. film projector, and so expand the work already being done.
- A Toc H Scrap-book was the highlight of MAIDENHEAD twenty-first birthday celebrations. It concluded with a salute to 'the boys of the old brigade' who paraded in 'beards' and bearing cards inscribed with the date of their initiation.
- The Sunshine Club, run by SOUTHPORT for elderly people, has among its members a Moss and a Lawn; the trustee of the savings club is a Prince, and they have three Clarks to deal with any income tax problems.

■ The fruit scheme launched this year by COWES and EAST COWES, despite unforeseen difficulties resulted in a gain of £16 1s. 6d., for the Family Purse.

■ During the past six months ASKRIGG, with the local W.I., have organised and operated a blood-donor campaign. Over one hundred donors have so far been enrolled.

■ In October, WIDNES commenced their winter session of free cinema shows at Eccleston Hall Sanatorium with the film "Perfect Strangers". *They aren't now!*

■ Old folk are making good use of another Darby and Joan centre recently opened by WORKSOP, with the co-operation of their Borough Council.

■ A street collection undertaken by PARKHURST & NEWPORT (Isle-of-Wight) at the local carnival processions realised £120.

■ Several AYLESBURY members are regular visitors to the Ministry of Pensions, special hospital for paraplegic patients at Stoke Mandeville. They will gladly contact any members or friends who become patients. Please advise: A. G. Hayward, Hemelton, Stanhope Close, Wendover, Bucks.

■ At a recent Oxford District Guestnight, the Mayor of Abingdon said his contact with 'Toc H' arose from ABINGDON's interest in the local Dr. Barnardo's Home.

■ In a 'combined operation' by BRANDON (West Suffolk), Men's and Women's Branches, four 'buses were used to take 'Over Seventies' for a jaunt to Lowestoft this summer.

■ An Autumn Fair organised by EAST SUSSEX District and held at Hastings in October, raised approximately £65 for 'Toc H' funds.

■ Launched only a few months ago, the 'Over 60' Club, sponsored by MIDDLEWOOD, has already doubled its membership.

■ Entries totalled 350 at the second annual Chrysanthemum Show, recently organised by CAMBORNE.

■ The enthusiasm of NORTH FERRIBY members resulted in the purchase and renovation of an ex-NAFFI hut, which has now become Ferriby village hall.

The Open Hustings

In printing this selection of letters received, it has been necessary to abridge a number of them considerably. Contributions intended for this feature should be brief and to-the-point, and addressed to The Editor, Toc H Journal, 47 Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

Unit Strength

DEAR EDITOR,

John Young's plea in the October JOURNAL for the union of Branches "where units have far more committee than ordinary members" has much to commend it and I suggest that where distance between Branches is not a bar, e.g., in provincial towns, struggling and flickering units might well give serious thought to his suggestion. Whilst I agree that a case can be made out for encouraging struggling and flickering Branches to retain their individuality and continue as separate entities, I think the advantages of small Branches uniting outweigh the disadvantages. Provided the combined Branch does not exceed an *effective* membership of thirty (or forty at most), the combined membership accruing from a union of small Branches would appear to give at least six obvious advantages:—

(1) A much wider choice when electing the lay office bearers, with fairer prospects of getting the right man for the right job;

(2) wider mixing of classes and trades, with a greater variety of views and opinions;

(3) a weekly meeting large enough to justify "bringing the expert to the unit";

(4) an effective man-power strength large enough to undertake *corporate* Toc H jobs;

(5) financial saving on overhead expenses such as rent, heating, lighting, etc.;

(6) Some relief to the (present) over-burdened Area Secretary.

TOM ORCHARD.

Northampton.

Film Units

DEAR EDITOR,

I am proud to say that as a result of our Mobile Cinema Unit experiences, published in the January JOURNAL, five other Branches have started film units and I am still receiving many letters asking for news and information.

I think the time is now ripe for the inclusion of a regular "Film Corner" in the JOURNAL, where members could exchange ideas and pass on their experiences to others. I feel sure that this would prove to be a welcome and popular feature. What do other readers think?

KEN WRIGHT.

Newport, Mon.

Guestnight Talks

DEAR EDITOR,

It is difficult to see some of these talks fitting harmoniously into the background of Toc H tradition, history and idealism, absorbed in a three-years' membership.

Because of this I would ask—are there subjects which could be regarded as definitely *not* Toc H?

Also, could a guiding principle be stated to help in the choice of subjects?

We explore industry and the professions at home, and travel far in our talks, but when they are ended how much has any listener advanced in Toc H idealism?

Surely our talks should be objective, and concerned with *people* rather than *things*, and arrived at helping us to a wider knowledge and deeper understanding of the human family of God.

Can any enlightened mind in Toc H see such ends being served by talks on—'how to build a doll's house'; 'mining engineering'; 'beekeeping'; 'gardening'; 'the manufacture of coal gas', etc.

I have heard talks on most of these subjects, and found them interesting and instructive, but, as far as the Toc H 'road' was concerned every one of them was a cul-de-sac.

F. F. M.

Saltash, Cornwall.

Toc H & Sport

DEAR EDITOR,

An informal Toc H Tennis Club functions at Weymouth; members of the three men's and two women's Branches playing regularly on certain evenings.

Weymouth men also arrange occasional cricket matches against British Railways' Staff, Dorchester Toc H and St. Francis' Home, Batcombe.

R. D. GILLESPIE-SMITH.

Weymouth.

DEAR EDITOR,

I would like to let you know that here in Northern Ireland a member runs a very successful football team in conjunction with an outstanding Sunday afternoon bible class. There is also a very good table-tennis team.

Belfast.

JOHN GILFILLAN.

Bulbs

DEAR EDITOR,

The Bulb scheme undertaken by East Pinchbeck Branch this summer has now closed, and we are very pleased to report that it was a huge success. We were able to send £50 to Lincolnshire Area before the end of the financial year, and will have about another £10 to send when all bills have been paid.

We are very grateful to all those who helped us to make the scheme such a success. We now hope that the bulbs all grow, and that we've sent the right colours to the right people!

GEORGE PACEY.

Pinchbeck, Lincs.

Trinity House

DEAR EDITOR,

A recent speaker at our Branch gave a grand talk on "Trinity House". I noticed how often he mentioned similar terms to those in use in 'Toc H'.

Here are a few: 'Mark', 'Warden', 'Light', 'Elder Brethren', 'Compass', 'Pilot', and, although I know this is a coincidence, the initials of both are 'T.H.'.

Can anyone enlighten me if all this is mere chance?

Bromley. JACK HERBERT.

Ceremony of Light

DEAR EDITOR,

In the October JOURNAL someone suggests that we abandon the Ceremony of Light because it is often casually done.

Twelve days ago my Scout Troop held a 'Court of Honour'. The usual start is the lighting, with ceremony, of fifteen candles: three represent the three parts of the Promise, the other twelve the American Scout Laws (they added two more in 1910). That night the Rector wasn't there to close with benediction and I, as chairman, was seeking some opposite way of closing the meeting. Then it dawned on me that it was October 12—and that Edith Cavell was a London Hospital Sister. So I left burning the candles which represent 'Trustworthy', 'Loyal', 'Brave' and 'Reverent', and then made them rise and simply told them

the story, stressing her famous words at the end—the whole of them. Then, as I have done before, I ran straight on to the words of the Ceremony of Light.

So many of my older fellows have heard and read enough about 'Toc H' to know it; one of them has been on 'Tower Hill' all summer—so the responses came eagerly enough. In one sense it may be quite illegal, but 'Toc H' has never been selfish in its stewardship of things which can be of value. The rather pregnant silence which followed for a few moments, before even the kids found their over-active tongues again, suggested that something had struck home.

Anyhow, I thought you might be interested to know, as an antidote to that letter.

NOEL A. GILLESPIE.

Wisconsin, U.S.A.

[*Jack Gillespie joined Toc H at Oxford in May, 1923, and became Branch Secretary; he spent some time with Tubby on Tower Hill, went to Africa with Albert Schweitzer as a medical student and for some years has been a doctor in the U.S.A.*].

DEAR EDITOR,

May I for a few moments invite E. Williams to a meeting of Corsham Branch, there is a silence one can 'feel' as the chosen member recites clearly the well-known words. Let him listen to the firm response with the accent on the 'will'. The minute's silence is deep and

reverent. We stand in thoughtful silence for a few seconds as the room lights are lit. We have communed with the Elder Brethren, renewed our promise and gained strength of purpose thereby. Need I say more?

SID STOCKDEN.

Corsham, Wilts.

DEAR EDITOR,

Is the experience of E. Williams peculiar to Toc H 1949? I think not. Some of us, in the past, have visited units where 'Light' has neither been treated as a ceremony nor with any great dignity. Is it not the job of Unit or District Officers to call attention to its significance and ensure that the words are known?

If 'Light' is to be discontinued today it is surely because some younger members regard it as a 'museum piece'. Personally I do not, but I feel this to be the stronger criticism.

J. J. WAKE.

Esher, Surrey.

DEAR EDITOR,

Let us keep the spirit of God in our meetings, our Ceremony of Light, our Lamps—if these things go we shall fail, and be just another club. I am no 'religious' man: I am an ordinary bloke, not well educated and so find it difficult to express myself with ease. But this time, 'Burgy' has struck a note of alarm in me and I've got to reply somehow. I served many years in the Royal Navy and have all

the weaknesses of the 'old sailor'—I often burst forth into 'nautical' language and I like a pint (or two) and am, in fact something of a scallywag, as is well known to the more dignified members of my Branch. I regret that this is not "brief and to the point", but in telling you all this, I want to convey to "Burgy" Williams the fact that his suggestion has profoundly shocked me. Please keep our Ceremony of 'Light' with dignity, remember the glorious company of the Elder Brethren, who, I believe, stand now very close to our sides and let us each week re-dedicate ourselves to "leap with joy" and to "fight at all costs".

Let there be 'Light'.

HARRY L. SCARFE.

Dagenham, Essex.

DEAR EDITOR,

We do well to call to mind those great souls of all ages who have "run the race set before them", and try to focus our thoughts on them.

Many members know of these great lives from biography, and not least from the regular glimpses of them in the JOURNAL. As a practical suggestion, the thoughts of members could be directed towards one, or more, of them immediately before taking 'Light'. In these days when time and thought are at a discount, Toc H would do well to practise more meditation.

Bolton, Lancs. F. L. E. COOKE.

DEAR EDITOR,

'Light' is an essential part of Toc H and the different units of the Family should have at least this one thing in common at their gatherings.

It is often worth while, even if only one newcomer is present, for a member to give a brief description of the ceremony beforehand. This also tends towards reminding all present of its implications, and to get the right atmosphere.

Geoff. Good.

*Joyce Green Hospital,
Dartford, Kent.*

DEAR EDITOR,

In this Branch members find that 'Light' helps in focussing their attention on the fundamental principles of Toc H. If it were dropped I am afraid the effect would be disastrous, as any movement forgetting its inspiration must obviously fail.

W. J. CARRUTHERS.

Clubmoor, Liverpool.

Extracts from some of many other letters received on this subject:

Will your correspondent read page 56 of *The Toc H Signpost*? "Quietly and without hurry", not 'clatter', 'mumble' or 'shuffling': his experience is, to say the least, unfortunate and to me 'in most places' is not correct.

Amesbury. F. C. MILNER.

'Light' has as much significance for the membership of 1949 as it had for earlier generations. Visitors are usually much impressed, and to drop it from Branch meetings would reduce them to the level of any other 'common or garden' meeting.

R. STAYMAN.

Boston Spa, Yorks.

Might I say that I have heard the Lord's Prayer at times recited indifferently in church and accompanied by feet-shuffling and coughing, but who would suggest that it should be omitted from church services?

Ilford. FRANK J. SMITH.

We had no idea that 'Light' was ever taken in such circumstances as your correspondent described. Our membership of 1949 fully values its significance and we should be very sorry to see the ceremony disappear from our Branch meetings.

Gt. Yarmouth. C. BOYCE.
(Women's Section).

Recently in our Branch we have taken 'Light' during evenings spent in repairing the premises. The fact that we have been all upside-down, and sometimes with most of the floor up-rooted, has made no difference. Circumstances and surroundings count for little when the flame is kindled.

ERIC M. ORME.
Harborne, Birmingham.

This correspondence will now cease—Ed.

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